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ER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE.

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**THE PRESS.**

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MONDAY MORNING, JAN. 29, 1872.

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From Palenque to Peten.

Some years ago M. Anthony M.

French gentleman of extensive scientific acquirements, made up his mind to explore one of the most secluded and unknown portions of the earth; that vast region which lies between Chiapas, Tabasco, Yucatan, and the republic Guatemala, comprises a considerable portion of each of those States, and marked on the map of Central America either by a blank, or by conjectural mountains, lakes,

A week's journey through the lagoons of Campeachy, with their strange reptile population and pest of insects, a slow-oiling canoe voyage, in which the wonderful forests pass dreamily by the traveler, brought M. Morel to Palenque. Such wonders of vegetation had already been disclosed, that he prepared for his tramp through the forest to the ruins

with composure, which, however, was occasionally disturbed by what he saw, for instance, an *arum*, whose leaves he measured. Each was two yards in length by one and a half in breadth, and capable of affording shade to three persons. The density of the forest concealed the ruins until M. Morelet and his companion were close upon them; and on ascending a steep elevation, they found themselves at the portal of a vast edifice, until that instant hidden. There is

more mystic solemnity attached to the absolutely obscure antiquity of these records than the past, in the New World, than to even the most venerable records of the Old. The latter have an unbroken sequence of tradition and history; they are links in the great progress of the evolution of time and events; we understand, or think we understand them. But these New World mysteries baffle us, existing in all the unfathomable antiquity side by side with all that is most modern, and

most full of change, evidences of extinct races which existed, unconscious of one half the planet, as one half the planet was of them. The travelers found themselves in front of the building called the Palace, of which they took possession, and where they made their abode for a fortnight. From the platform crowned by the vast, silent ruins, a great ocean of tropical forest, the study of only a few of whose forms would absorb a lifetime, stretches out illimitably, and the awful solitudes are peopled with the rarest and most

They resumed their river-journey after a detour to San Geronimo and its neighborhood, where the population seems to be letting itself sink out of existence through sheer laziness. The hacienda life of the region closely approaches absolute stagnation; the stillness of the logwood forests of Campeache broods over the scene. Men content themselves with the barest necessities of life, and the one recreation of the women is thus de-

scribed: "At sunset, groups of women with braided complexions and floating hair, half-naked, but glittering with tinsel, throng the paths leading from hacienda, to bathe in the still waters of the lagoons. They chant melancholy and drowsy songs, the melody of which is doubtless inspired by the gloom of everything around though the words seem to belong to some more fortunate clime.

San Geronimo is exceedingly fertile, yet there is not a fruit tree or a useful vegetable in the whole district. The houses are

with fish, but all that are eaten are imported. In the midst of herds of cattle, the inhabitants dine on beef salted in the United States, and drink the nauseous water of the swamps. And yet, these Creole Spaniards are the descendants of the Conquistadores, and a Balboa, who knows his origin too, is a simple herdsman.

Wonderful natural beauty, extraordinary profusion of animal and vegetable life, extreme simplicity of manners, and entire iso-

lation, physical and mental, from all the rest of the world, on the part of the inhabitants—these are the chief characters of the romants—place which the traveler had reached with such difficulty, and where he had along and dangerous illness. Here he made valuable additions to his collection, for all the children in the place were employed in finding "specimens" for him. Lizzards, birds, serpents, insects, they brought them in large numbers; their parents dispensed them from going to school.

school, and they might devote themselves to the remunerative task. The schoolmaster vainly remonstrated; the men actually took to the pursuit of specimens; the women brought the produce of their poultry-yards, and encumbered M. Morelet's dwelling with their indiscriminate contributions. During the whole of his sojourn the only branch of industry ever successfully introduced into Florer flourished. The town is irregularly built; the dwellings, for the most part, are simple huts thatched with palm leaves. The

use of chimneys and windows is unknown. In the streets, there are neither shops nor workmen, nor is there a public market. Every one depends on his own production, or on exchanges with his neighbors, for food.

If any one has need of money, he prepares some article of domestic consumption—such as bread, chocolate, or candles and sends his children about with them from hut to hut in search of a purchaser. Very little suffices for a population whose only ambition is to live without labor. No one ever thinks of

requiring wealth. Possession is the only title to the soil they recognize. Any one who clears a piece of ground makes use of it as long as he pleases; and if any dispute arises as to its ownership, it is settled by the paternal fiat of the corregidor. Instead of the sounds of the hammer and the sugar mill, one's ears are filled constantly with the harmony of musical instruments. As soon as the sun goes down, and the evening breezes set in, the town is full of sounds of mirth

and hilarity, which continue till the night is far advanced. Every one having received the same amount of education, and enjoying an equal degree the privilege of doing nothing, the most perfect equality exists in society, which is not troubled by the pretensions of its members on the score of birth, learning, or fortune.

**THE DARK SPIRIT OF SECTARIANISM.**—It was before the war. Dinah was "a free nigger," she was a colored girl, and she was a

ger." She had bought and paid for herself, and having come North, and being employed as cook in a family living not a thousand miles from Broadway, and making money, concluded she would buy Sambo, her husband, whom she had left at "Ole Massa's in Virginny."

With the help of her generous employer Dinah succeeded, and Sambo came on and set up business.

For a time Dinah was happy; but, as in

other cases, clouds came after a while over hermatrimonial sky. Sambo was going his own road. Dinah went to the "Abyssinian Baptist" meeting, and Sambo attended the "Ethiopian Baptist"—two rival churches of the colored folk.

"Massa Charly," said Dinah, one day, "I ain't goin' to invest in no more niggers. I bought that Sambo feller, and he's got too stuck up to live. He's too big feelin' to go to my meetin' wid me. He says it's not 'ristonable enuff." Waa... waa... waa... she

trade union, who pays a pleasant two-and-a-half-dollars, and he goes to the other meeting whar' they gives their man fo' hundred." "Which church do you belong to, Dinah?" asked "Massa Charley." "Well, thar's two cullud Baptis' churches: Sambo he belongs to the *Thopian* Baptis', and I belongs to the *Obscene* Baptis'!"—EDITOR'S DRAWER, in *Harper's Magazine* for February.

years ago in Bourbon county, Kentucky, a drunken, worthless, one-eyed fellow named C—, whose chief occupations were getting tipsy and fighting. There had just been elected a new prosecuting attorney, who was entitled to part of the fines which might be imposed on the malefactors of Bourbon, and he determined to squelch old C—. He did not wait long for an opportunity to have

him arrested. B——, the constable, said, as it was an important case, he wanted about three days to get an appropriate jury to try it. On the third day the new attorney was informed that things were ready at the courthouse. There was the judge, and behind him the constable. On one side sat old one-eyed C——; on the other, the twelve jurymen, "jess like him," on benches forming a triangle, each with a plug of tobacco and jack-knife, the gift of the constable, whittling

The astonished prosecutor looked at the jury, and exclaimed:

"Where did the constable get this jury?"

The constable quietly replied: "I thought the prisoner was entitled to be tried by a jury of his *peers*, and I've been out three days hunting 'em up. I've got twelve here, but if you don't like 'em, I've got twelve more outside waiting."

The prosecutor looked out and saw, seated on the bench, twelve more dittoes, similar

The constable wrote his return on the warrant thus, "Dismissed by the county attorney *on sight of the jury*," and so it stands recorded to this day. The prisoner was discharged, and left the court-house rejoicing at having been deprived of his constitutional right of being tried by the previously mentioned citizens.—EDITOR'S DRAWER, in *Harper's Magazine*.

azine for February.

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